



Economic and Social Council

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Commission for Social Development

Thirty-ninth session

13-23 February 2001

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis, International Council on Social Welfare, and International Movement ATD Fourth World, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Child Welfare League of America, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Social Workers, and Pax Christi International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Armenian Relief Society, a non-governmental organization on the Roster of the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2001/1.



The family is the basic unit of society. It is through the family that economic, social and spiritual values are learned. As we enter the twenty-first century and member States and non-governmental organizations meet at the session of the Commission for Social Development this year, we — as members of the NGO Committee on the Family-NY — would like to call attention to issues of concern to the family.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in Article 25:

“(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

“(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.”

These human rights are as much a part of the issues for families around the world today as when they were originally formulated in 1948.

We ask the Commission and the member States to recognize and address the needs of families in the following ways:

(a) Accelerate the many efforts already under way to hasten the eradication of poverty;

(b) Increase the focus on education for all family members, with particular emphasis on the girl-child and women;

(c) Establish support for families, especially mothers and children, who have suffered displacement due to armed conflict;

(d) Recognize the value, and promote the unique skills of, elderly family members;

(e) Increase efforts to provide for the social and economic needs of children without families or separated from their families.

We, the signatory non-governmental organizations, cannot emphasize enough the value of families in this new millennium as a key towards building a world where human development and human security are ensured, where all people are free from want and fear.



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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

**Priority theme: enhancing social protection and reducing
vulnerability in a globalizing world**

Statement submitted by Pax Christi International, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2001/1.



Pax Christi International offers suggestions related to the priority theme of the thirty-ninth session of the Commission: Social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world. By "social protection", we understand the responsibility of societies to see that the fundamental needs of all are met, based on universal human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural. "Vulnerability" we understand as the high probability that some groups and individuals will be denied social protection unless affirmative action is taken to secure their human right to protection.

We want to see the Commission grapple with linkages between social development and sustainable development, human rights, and peace and security. In each case the Commission can contribute by analysis of these linkages and by promoting the widespread dissemination of accounts of good practices in social protection and the reduction of vulnerability in a globalizing world.

Social and sustainable development

The stalemate in negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is clearly a matter of urgency for social development as well as sustainable development. The Commission for Social Development should play a role in sounding the alarm about this issue. The Commission can also call for the dissemination of good practices in reduction of carbon emissions and in pollution reduction, particularly at the national policy level, but also by the private sector.

Another issue of linkage is water use. For example, the use of water in Israel and Palestine has far-reaching consequences. The Israelis use seven times more water per capita than do the Palestinians. They also control most of the water sources and thereby restrict Palestinian use of water. There is a lack of cooperation between the two parties that is leading to further social inequities and serious environmental degradation. The Commission for Social Development should work towards fostering dialogue and technical cooperation between Israel and Palestine on the sharing of their limited water resources. Such a dialogue is all the more critical given the breakdown of normal political communication at present.

Social development and human rights

The report of the United Nations Development Programme for 2000 challenges economic policies that do not reflect equal rights for all. The report urges international bodies, including the World Trade Organization, to be guided by human rights principles and commitments in decision-making. The report also tells global corporations that making profits is not enough; they have responsibilities to respect human rights, too. We would like to see the Commission for Social Development initiate fact-finding into good practices of social development arising from globalization and the expansion of multinational corporations into the poorer countries that exemplify linkages between social development and respect for human rights. At the same time, negative impacts of globalization on poor people in developing countries must not be glossed over or minimized.

Preparations have begun for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Spain in 2002. Here is an opportunity for the Commission for Social Development to collaborate with the Global Meeting of Generations in intergenerational dialogues about the implications of extended lifespans on a whole range of issues rightly seen as falling under the priority theme of this session of the Commission and the future work of the Commission in preparation for the Assembly in 2002. This is an area in which the close relationship of rights to responsibilities can be highlighted effectively.

Social development and peace and security

The Commission for Social Development can take leadership in calling attention to good practices in accord with ILO Convention No. 182, on eliminating the worst forms of child labour. This Convention came into force only last year. Now is the time to research and hold up models of compliance with the Convention.

The ILO Convention includes child soldiers as one of the worst forms of child labour. A child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including — but not limited to — cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms. Here indeed is an

area of great concern regarding social protection and the reduction of vulnerability.

The arms trade is a major factor working against social protection and social development. We would like to see the Commission become an effective voice for the victims of this lethal trade. Some of the industrialized States that built enormous arsenals during the Cold War now equip intrastate wars which ravage entire societies and make a mockery of social development.

Internationally there are multiplying efforts to provide training for ways of preventing armed conflicts based on education and training for peace services grounded on active non-violence. We ask the Commission to sponsor a study of this emerging international movement in its varied expressions as a good practice in social development.

For the past five years the Commission for Social Development has helped keep alive the commitments of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. These commitments will continue to challenge the work of the Commission and rightly serve as focal points of its work. We urge a development of methodology in the work of the Commission, through linkages with efforts at sustainable development, human rights, and peace and security. This work should include both rigorous analysis and gathering and dissemination of good practices that can inspire, hope and animate both Governments and civil society to effective action.



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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:

**Sub-theme: the role of volunteerism in the promotion
of social development**

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2001/1.



The International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres (IFS) is a membership association of national, regional and local non-governmental multipurpose community-based organizations working to strengthen local communities around the world. Through its members, it provides social services at the local level and represents community concerns at national and international levels. Voluntarism has played a significant role in the settlement movement and in the empowerment of local communities. The following statement is based on the long and varied experience of IFS with volunteerism.

The issue of volunteerism must be considered from several perspectives. From the point of view of the community, volunteerism provides an opportunity for the citizens of a democratic society to participate of their own free will to build their own communities. The settlement movement, through its varied use of volunteers, provides examples of both the value of volunteering to the community and to the individuals concerned. The experience of IFS provides examples of almost every kind of volunteerism, varying from Board membership at every level (international, national and local) to the direct provision of a range of social services. However, voluntarism, to be effective, must be based on agreed principles, goals and objectives.

The roots of volunteerism/voluntarism go back to the social ills created by the industrial revolution and the input of differing social and economic policies of Governments throughout the world. Moreover, the role of volunteers has changed over the years, sometimes in accord with demographic changes, sometimes based on economic needs and sometimes on political or cultural policy.

Today Voluntarism seems to be in the forefront of the campaign for global awareness. In many countries the cause of increased participation is the crisis in their social protection systems. Where Governments — national or local — are not providing or funding adequate social services, volunteer organizations find themselves attempting to fill the gap. For this activity they must find funds — and make use of volunteers both as advocates and as workers. Often, even in countries where voluntarism has long been accepted as an element of social policy, lack of training and appropriate guidelines has meant inadequate operations. Another cause of the growth of volunteerism is the economic globalization of many areas of employment, with the accompanying increase

in poverty which in turn requires volunteer assistance from the community. In addition, demographic changes, especially but not only in the developing countries, are calling for more aid and more participation, both for young and old.

The current growth of volunteerism emphasizes the need to consider the problems involved and to reach international agreement on the principles which should govern voluntarism in its broadest scope. The suggestions of IFS with respect to such principles are:

(a) Volunteerism is a fundamental value of democratic society. It is active citizenship; individuals accept responsibility for social and civic affairs — whether directly or by support of voluntary service organizations;

(b) The local community is the basis for voluntary action. A healthy, secure, economically strong community includes a strong voluntary sector (voluntary non-profit organizations);

(c) Volunteerism begins with instilling values in children and young people such as sharing with others, helping others who need aid, keeping the environment healthy and clean, developing projects and participating in community service;

(d) Voluntary action values diversity and the full spectrum of differences in the community — age, ethnicity, capability, culture, religion, socio-economic background, education and training;

(e) Volunteerism benefits both the volunteers themselves and the causes they support. Volunteer work is a significant experience in personal development (and frequently professional development as well);

(f) Volunteers are “willing” and “non-salaried”. However, to make volunteers effective, they need to be trained, supported, valued and recognized. A volunteer programme requires skilled volunteer management and adequate resources. Volunteers must not be used as inexpensive substitutes for regular employees.

IFS suggests that the objectives for the International Year of the Volunteer should be:

(a) Support for the growth of volunteerism as a positive factor in social policy;

(b) Support for the role of volunteers in community actions;

(c) Development of guidelines for volunteer management (including training and definition of roles appropriate for volunteers — boards, professional activities, productive employment, attendance etc.);

(d) Definition of the nature of voluntary activities and responsibilities;

(e) Elimination of the many barriers discouraging voluntarism and impeding community development (such as costly building requirements and other local regulations);

(f) Encouragement of governmental support for voluntary action through supportive legislation and funding to voluntary non-profit organizations.

IFS, in consequence of its own experience with the use of volunteers, also recommends that a study be made of the issue of travel expenses (local as well as national or international) and stipends for volunteer service. It is the inability to meet such costs that frequently bars individuals from volunteering their skill in the community. By contrast, there are many voluntary agencies which operate entirely on the basis of volunteers and have no funds to meet such expenses.

IFS is prepared to make available information and examples of both the challenges faced and the portents for volunteerism in the field of social service, including the use of volunteer training programmes as well as their supervision and the solutions found for issues such as funding and the hesitancy of some trade unions as well as professional staff to accept volunteers as co-workers.

IFS hopes that these suggestions will be considered by the Commission for Social Development.



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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:

Priority theme: enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world

Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, HelpAge International, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Soroptimist International, and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Foundation for the Rights of the Family, International Catholic Child Bureau, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Psychologists, International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, International Federation for Family Development, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of University Women, International Kolping Society, Italian Centre of Solidarity, New Humanity, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for International and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students), Salvation Army, Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture, SOS Kinderdorf International, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, and World Movement of Mothers, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Council; and

* E/CN.5/2000/L.



**European Union of Women, International Association of Charities,
and International Inner Wheel, non-governmental organizations
on the Roster of the Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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We, the international non-governmental organizations listed above, maintain that,

Whereas,

The family is the fundamental institution of society;

Families are important in fostering the individuality of their members as the first school of social relations and of education in human rights and gender equity, as well as a sense of community, and it must be acknowledged that the family requires support for these responsibilities;

The family is a focus of external factors and social changes, and at the same time is an agent for these changes;

Decent living conditions, including adequate income, nutrition and health, are necessary for family well-being;

Family breakdown can also be an important result of poverty and the inability of families to provide for and nurture their children. The family is also currently confronted with the negative effects of globalization and with the impact of sanctions in deprived countries;

At the special session of the General Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalized world", held in Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000, a number of speakers expressed the view that, five years after the World Summit, poverty continued to be a scourge for millions of people;

The President of the special session in referring to the plight of the world's children said that their despair had been further exacerbated by the breakdown of the family and by the horror of organized crime and child soldiering;

One of the documents at the special session, on further initiatives for social development, recognized that stable, supportive and nurturing family relationships, supported by communities and professional services, can provide a vital shield against substance abuse, particularly among minors;

The document, while acknowledging that various forms of the family exist in different cultural and social systems, recognized that the family plays a key role in social development and is a strong force of social cohesion and integration;

We, therefore,

1. Ask the United Nations and the Governments of the world to centre their attention, as a priority issue, on ways and means to eradicate poverty in the world in the nearest possible future;
2. Demand that greater attention be paid to helping families in their supporting, educating and nurturing roles and in combating the causes and consequences of family disintegration;
3. Emphasize that social support should especially meet the needs of disadvantaged and poor families as well as families with ageing or disabled members. It should assist women and men to reconcile employment and family life and responsibilities, provide flexible working hours for parents who participate in the labour force, as well as quality child-care facilities, and social security should also make provisions for those who choose to work and care for the family at home;
4. Urge that children be protected against all kinds of exploitation and trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic violence and the consequences of armed conflict, and that families be supported to ensure a safe and stable environment for their children;
5. Request that family issues be mainstreamed into United Nations programmes related to social development and, especially, to issues impinging on the family, such as poverty, illiteracy, inadequate housing and social services, age and disability, drug and alcohol dependence, diseases and an unhealthy environment;
6. Propose that the Family Unit within the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, be supported and enhanced so as to encourage and facilitate the collaboration with specialized agencies and other organizations in family and social issues;
7. Welcome the initiative to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. We, as non-governmental organizations, are prepared to collaborate fully with the Family Unit in the preparations for, and observance of, the tenth anniversary.



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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

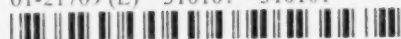
Multi-year programme of work of the Commission for 2002-2006

Statement submitted by the International Movement ATD Fourth World, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2001/1.



Outcome of the Geneva special session and what remains to be done

The World Summit for Social Development undeniably contributed to building awareness of the seriousness of the situation of the world's most indigent people. A new consensus is in the process of forming: extreme poverty will henceforth be considered a denial of human rights and an intolerable violation of human dignity. It has also been recognized that the intangible right to life includes within it existence in human dignity with the minimum necessities of life.¹ States have a responsibility to encourage participation of the poorest populations in the decision-making process at all levels. The existence of extreme poverty prevents full and effective enjoyment of human rights; it weakens, and even destroys the possibility of, grass-roots participation. The process launched in Copenhagen gave a face to these populations, beyond numbers and statistics. It highlighted the fact that, in many places, the poorest are suffering from hunger and that they lack adequate housing and access to quality education. They are therefore deprived of cultural and spiritual development. They are more subject than others to disease and malnutrition and are more vulnerable than others to economic crises and natural disasters.

In order to put an end to poverty, at the special session held in Geneva, in June 2000, the General Assembly reaffirmed the commitments undertaken in Copenhagen. It decided to implement new initiatives for social development. These commitments, which provide a common reference point for the entire United Nations family, were reaffirmed in September 2000, at the Millennium Summit in New York.

At the Summit the General Assembly also decided:

(a) To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water;

(b) To ensure that, by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that

girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education; and

(c) By the same date, to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates.

It is satisfying that the international community has undertaken such clear and precise commitments accompanied by a timetable.

At the same time, in its World Development Report 2000/2001, the World Bank notes that, given the growth rate of the world population and the economic growth rate, considerable and concerted efforts would be necessary in order to effectively attain these targets in 2015. For this reason, the International Movement ATD Fourth World wishes to draw attention to the fate of millions of poor children born this year, who, owing to the slowness of the measures being implemented, will be lifelong victims of hunger; to the millions of boys and girls forever deprived of an elementary education; to the millions of parents living in roadside huts; to the millions of fathers seeking work in vain; and to the millions of mothers robbed of any hope of immediate improvement. It also notes the fate of populations who may never be reached and who will thus remain doomed to survive in misery for another generation. ATD Fourth World questions the validity of an economic approach in which the well-being of millions of people hinges on the eventuality of adequate economic growth with no guarantee, moreover — at least for the time being — that its benefits will be equitably distributed to the poorest people.

For an approach based on human rights

Extreme poverty is — in the human conscience — considered a violation of human rights, as are slavery, apartheid and torture. The exercise of these fundamental rights cannot depend on economic growth or sound market functioning. Hence, even where a poverty reduction policy might help ensure respect for certain rights, only an approach based on human rights can place man at the centre of development, as advocated by the United Nations. Such an approach should strive to ensure that every programme is designed to reach each human being for which it is intended. It would mean making an effort to guarantee that programmes are beneficial to all.

¹ See Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/12 entitled "Human rights and extreme poverty".

ATD Fourth World therefore supports a poverty eradication approach based on fundamental rights. Only such a rights-based approach can make people and their communities the actors. It will focus special attention on the most destitute groups, since they are the ones most affected by widespread denial of rights. Such an approach begins with people themselves and fosters the necessary conditions for their effective participation. This is borne out by the fact that, under certain conditions, the poorest people are best able to speak about poverty. An approach based on the indivisibility of human rights attaches importance to all rights at the same time. Under it, participation or freedom of expression do not depend on whether or not one has an education or housing; nor do rights, such as the right of access to health, education or a decent standard of living, depend on whether or not populations are already participating or enjoying freedom of expression. A rights-based approach is global in nature and recognizes that rights are multidimensional in character. There is a growing realization that poverty means lack of income, health, education and decision-making capacity and that it is characterized by extreme vulnerability.

Only such an approach recognizes the urgency of implementing the right to a decent standard of living; the urgency of realizing each human being's right to culture, education and spirituality; the urgency, even the duty, of mustering all forces in order to eradicate extreme poverty.

Eradication of extreme poverty, the foremost responsibility of States and of the international community

The eradication of extreme poverty, it must be recalled, remains the primary responsibility of States and of the international community. It is the State's duty to establish a coherent vision of reality. The State must obtain a consensus in order to organize collective action against extreme poverty. It must establish a framework for effective action against this scourge. The State must be the guarantor of the participation and partnership of the most destitute populations. Lastly, it must monitor and evaluate the implementation of the measures contemplated, so as to adapt and correct them.

Elaboration of a declaration and steps towards a convention on human rights and extreme poverty

Following the commitments undertaken in Copenhagen, the greatest importance should be attached to the initiative of the Commission on Human Rights to consider the appropriateness of a declaration on human rights and extreme poverty.² This approach constitutes a first step towards a convention which the International Movement ATD Fourth World fervently hopes for. Such a declaration should clearly state that the question of extreme poverty must be addressed from the human rights perspective. The declaration should affirm the right of every human being — hence, also those who are deprived of all their essential rights, wherever in the world they may be — to live in an environment in which their human dignity is respected and to enjoy their fundamental rights fully and completely and thus be able to assume their responsibilities towards their families and communities.

It should take into account the efforts and initiatives of individuals and groups living in extreme poverty. It should reaffirm the responsibility of States and the international community and define their obligations. It should take into account the role of other actors in civil society and the private sector and promote an environment which is conducive to initiatives of all kinds, particularly voluntary initiatives. It should encourage the media to assume their role with regard to human rights education. It should define extreme poverty in all its dimensions and describe the fate of those who are extremely poor. It should ensure their participation. It should provide for local, national and international measures and take into account the cultural diversity of regions. It should draw on national or local experiences where the poorest and most disadvantaged people have indeed had occasion to cooperate in the design, implementation and evaluation of measures by participating in civil society organizations. It should prepare a course of action culminating in a convention on human rights and extreme poverty which would be built on partnership with persons living in abject poverty.

² See Economic and Social Council decision 1998/250, point (f).

International Year of Volunteers (2001): the promotion of voluntary commitment

ATD Fourth World wishes to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his note entitled "The role of volunteerism in the promotion of social development" (E/CN.5/2001/6). This note forms an excellent basis for the Commission to capitalize on this International Year of Volunteers in order to ensure that all persons, even the most destitute, are recognized and supported in their voluntary commitments to their fellow human beings. We wish to draw attention to the following passages in the Secretary-General's note:

"13. ... The lack of awareness and knowledge about what happens below the waterline of public visibility inhibits Governments and other development actors from establishing partnerships and synergy with the very reservoirs of energetic solidarity that enable and empower society. These attributes of social capital should be seen as an indispensable component of any strategy aimed at promoting social integration, poverty reduction and sustainable development. ...

"28. ... The promotion of volunteering often involves the resurrection of dormant values that have always existed, be they expressed through tribal groups, village councils and mutual aid and self-help women's and youth associations, but which have been negatively affected by war, poverty or epidemics and, in some societies, by the decline of support systems such as the family and wider kinship networks and religious institutions. ...

"34. Another area for government action is the promotion of initiatives aimed at expanding the opportunities for volunteer contribution among excluded segments of the population. Given the sense of personal worth and the social utility that individuals and society gain from voluntary action, the right to volunteer should apply to all sectors of society. ..."

This last paragraph goes on to refer specifically to people with disabilities, older persons and refugees. ATD Fourth World would like to suggest that it should also include populations living in extreme poverty. They often make huge efforts to support others who are victims of poverty without benefiting from the overall

framework which this statement sets out as an objective.

Within the context of the International Year of Volunteers 2001, the promotion of the human investment of women and men who work in the field with the most destitute groups is of paramount importance. Thus, the International Movement ATD Fourth World has put forward a number of proposals with a view to promoting such voluntary commitment. In its view, strong impetus must be given to the voluntary commitment of persons of all milieux and of all ages who are willing to contribute their time and skills.

(a) This should be done by, inter alia, fostering the participation of youth in the social development process, particularly in poverty eradication. The development of a volunteer service, for example, would be one way of doing this. Such mobilization must be a component of national policies on youth and cultural exchanges among States. Measures such as granting retirement points and scholarships, or training and follow-up guarantees, might be incentives for young persons and others to become volunteers.

(b) Within the framework of the commitments undertaken at the Copenhagen Summit, it goes without saying that a commitment to full-time volunteer work among populations living in extreme poverty should be promoted. Persons of all backgrounds must be offered the opportunity to volunteer for a number of years; a sufficiently long period is essential in order to be able to build mutual understanding, restore ties with other milieux and within the community, act in a certain spirit of equality and ensure the participation of all. Disadvantaged persons, whether working or unemployed, must also be able to benefit from such incentives as financial support or periods — comparable to sabbaticals — during which they can acquire new skills and broaden their social and cultural horizons.

(c) As for the United Nations, it should take an initiative aimed at providing incentives for volunteers from all countries and all milieux — in all parts of the world — to devote part of their time to the eradication of extreme poverty. It should establish an ad hoc working group, accountable to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to study conditions and criteria to be established for such volunteer work, based on practical experiences; consider legal, administrative and financial modalities;

and formulate proposals with a view to creating a legal framework conducive to their implementation. Competent non-governmental organizations should be represented in this working group.

International Movement ATD Fourth World is of the view that there are two closely linked areas where volunteerism plays a predominant role in efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, namely, human activity and the promotion of artistic and cultural expression. Most of the time, the very poor are like prisoners caught in a vicious circle of alternating forced activity and inactivity. Unemployment — or chronic underemployment — seriously curtails their resources, usurps their time, preoccupies their minds and limits their availability for all other activities. It deprives them of virtually any opportunity to participate in cultural and social life. Such deprivation prevents them from finding decent work and rules out all opportunities for the harmonious development of their potential. In this context, volunteerism can make a unique contribution. For extremely impoverished persons, participation in artistic and cultural activities can open the door to new relations.

As for the discussion on employment and human activity, the objective of full employment and social integration, decided at the Copenhagen Summit, forms an essential whole for attaining social development which fosters the participation of all and benefits all. This objective requires a multidimensional strategy in which work and training must be viewed integrally with other aspects of human development: the place of each person in the community and society, and access to and participation in social and cultural life. These are all areas in which volunteerism plays a vital role.

**Multi-year programme of work of the
Commission for 2002-2006: Follow-up to the
International Year of the Family**

The International Movement ATD Fourth World supports the note of the Secretary-General on this topic, and intends to contribute to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. We urge Governments to bear in mind that this anniversary is of the utmost importance for families so oppressed by poverty that they have very little opportunity to maintain family ties and to express their views on these matters. We continue to see children all over the world taken from their families simply for material reasons. We know couples who live apart, simply because they

are constantly seeking decent employment. Too often, government policies aggravate the tremendous pressure placed on families that are trying stubbornly to maintain family ties — ties which are all they can depend on.

The tenth anniversary must be a turning point in which families living in extreme poverty will finally be consulted as partners on policies which shape their lives. We join many members of the NGO Committee on the Family in drawing attention to:

(a) The needs and resources of families trying to survive in situations of war, refugee camps and internal displacement;

(b) The tragic fate of children living in poverty and that of their parents when they are separated from each other by the placement of children in foster homes, international adoption or exploitation.

Since the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs focuses special attention on these five main substantive themes, we are confident that it will do so in consultation with these families living in extreme poverty.



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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Sub-theme: the role of volunteerism in the promotion
of social development

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2001/L



The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) appreciates the opportunity to intervene in the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development, coinciding with the 2001 International Year of Volunteers in support of a society for all ages. AARP is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, with a membership of 33 million persons and over 72,000 volunteers.

We would like to call to the attention of the Commission for Social Development the contributions of older persons worldwide to volunteerism in the promotion of social development.

In celebration of the 2001 International Year of Volunteers, AARP, in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers and with the Programme on Ageing of the United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, launched a postcard campaign requesting the feedback of older persons worldwide on their contributions as volunteers.

The worldwide campaign consisted of over 540 responses from 51 countries and has confirmed the vital role that older persons play in their communities and families. The definition of "volunteerism" varies from person to person, nation to nation, but the idea of volunteering remains a common value bestowed upon persons of all ages and communities of all nations. We request that the results of the postcard campaign be included in the revised Plan of Action on Ageing as a contribution to the second World Assembly on Ageing.

Although many older persons worldwide are socially excluded from their communities, they continue to volunteer. In many cases, society expects older persons to disengage from social life activities as they age, but owing to the volunteer postcard campaign, it is apparent that older persons continue to volunteer even after social exclusion.

A recent report of the Secretary-General to the Commission for Social Development stated that older persons were increasingly recognized as contributors to society, rather than simply dependants, and as agents of change themselves. Volunteering is one of the many ways in which older persons contribute to society, acting as agents of change.

AARP requests that the Commission, in its deliberation on the sub-theme, recognize the importance and extent of the contributions of older

persons to society and social development as volunteers. It also wishes to extend its assistance in any further research concerning older volunteers.

AARP would like to encourage further reference to the contributions of older persons to their communities, societies and their countries in the revised Plan of Action on Ageing which is to be presented at the second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002.



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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:
Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes
of action pertaining to the situation of social groups**

**Statement submitted by International Federation
on Ageing and Soroptimist International, non-governmental
organizations in general consultative status with the Economic
and Social Council; International Council of Jewish Women
and International Humanist and Ethical Union, non-governmental
organizations in special consultative status with the Council;
Armenian International Women's Association and Loretto
Community (Sisters of Loretto), non-governmental organizations
on the Roster of the Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2001/1.



Older persons and the new millennium

In 1982, Member States of the United Nations met in Vienna for the World Assembly on Ageing, from which emerged the International Plan of Action on Ageing (resolution 37/51), which listed 14 principles and 62 recommendations for action. We applaud the United Nations and Governments around the world for the farsightedness demonstrated by this action, which created the first international document on ageing to guide the formulation of policies and programmes for older persons around the world.

Also, we appreciate the actions of the General Assembly in its adoption of the United Nations Principles of Older Persons, during its forty-sixth session, and its approval of the Global Targets on Ageing for the Year 2001, during its forty-seventh session. We are also encouraged by the inclusion of references or sections on older persons in the documents of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

We commend Member States for resolving to convene a second World Assembly on Ageing, in 2002, to be devoted to an overall review of the outcome of the First World Assembly and to the adoption of a revised plan of action and a long-term strategy on ageing. We also recognize that during the nearly 20 years since the adoption of the first Plan of Action, some progress has been made towards following the principles and achieving the action items of the Plan. However, the world economic and social situations have changed significantly, and population ageing has emerged as a major issue for all countries, both developed and developing.

The International Federation on Ageing, with the support of the NGO Committee on Ageing, representing more than 50 non-governmental organizations, views the second World Assembly as an unparalleled occasion for Governments and civil society to continue to identify ways to meet the basic needs of older persons. It is also essential to recognize these individuals as a valuable resource in their communities and in society, valuing the human potential of older men and women and the wealth of human capital they represent. To achieve these goals, we propose that delegates to the second World

Assembly on Ageing consider the following objectives and action items.

Recommendations for Action

1. The 1999 International Year of Older Persons gave the world a meaningful theme, "Towards a society for all ages". Additionally, the Year was built around a four-part conceptual framework: (a) the situation of older persons — health, housing, family, income security and employment; (b) lifelong individual development — recognizing change and the need for adaptive life skills; (c) multigenerational relationships — acknowledging social, economic and cultural revolutions affecting societies; and (d) development — outlining the challenge to reconciling population ageing and continued socio-economic development. We strongly urge that the formulation of a plan of action on ageing for the new millennium reflect both this theme and the four elements of the conceptual framework. Together, they provide a strong, clearly stated basis on which to build a plan of action for developing and implementing policies and programmes addressed to older persons.
2. Reflecting on the 1982 Plan of Action, we find that many of the recommendations still remain important items for action — for example: social protection, including income security and employment; housing and the environment; health and nutrition; the family; and education. However, new and important areas of concern have emerged, including removing age barriers that exclude older persons from literacy, education, and income-generating programmes; the developing of programmes to educate society about the need for human rights for older persons; the inclusion of older persons at all levels of planning and implementation of development programmes; providing legal, financial and social assistance to grandparents who have had to assume the primary responsibility for their grandchildren; the developing of specific economic data on the economic status of older persons, particularly the economic security of older women; and addressing the needs of those older persons who are involved in forced migrations, becoming internationally or internally displaced refugees.
3. Because 70 per cent of the world's population 60 years of age and over will be living in developing nations by 2025, a focus of the second World Assembly

must be on policies and programmes linked to issues of social and economic development, including participation by civil society and non-governmental organizations. We believe failure to do so would undermine a new plan of action. We urge not only recognition of this but also call for consideration of ways in which support — financial, technical or other — can assist in translating the plan into action for developing nations. We look to partnerships between Governments and civil society to help achieve the objectives of the plan in both developing and developed nations. We further urge that in adopting a new plan of action on ageing, Member States recognize the importance of the plan by mandating national reports to enable monitoring progress on the implementation of the plan.

Increasing longevity is a central issue for the second World Assembly on Ageing, with women outnumbering men as chronological age increases. The oldest old are predominantly women. In much of the world, women are likely to be the poorer gender of the oldest old and victims of discrimination. Member States must address these conditions and formulate plans and programmes to be presented at the second World Assembly on Ageing.

4. Finally, we believe in the importance of holding a simultaneous, proximate NGO Forum to complement the World Assembly, similar to events held in Istanbul and Copenhagen, during Habitat II and the Social Summit. Additionally, we believe that the participation of credentialed NGO representatives during the second World Assembly on Ageing is critically important. Therefore, we respectfully request that provision be made for the voices of older persons, as well as young people, to be heard by those who will have the responsibility for framing and developing the substance of the new plan. To the extent that the 2002 plan of action on ageing reflects the views and priorities of a wide spectrum of individuals from around the world, it can become a blueprint for "a society of all ages".



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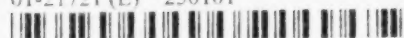
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:
Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes
of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

Statement submitted by Foundation for the Rights of the Family, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2001/1.



The family is universal, the cornerstone of society, a unit of production and consumption. It is essential to the education and socialization of children and youth and to the stabilization of adults. It is the place where children, the elderly, the sick and disabled receive emotional and practical support.

The family unit is also a powerful agent of social change. Factors such as demography, fertility, ageing population, environment, social welfare and development are ultimately influenced by family behaviour and by the decisions taken within the family unit.

The family, in turn, is influenced by external factors, among others, modernization, technology, poverty, armed conflicts and natural disasters. This causes the family to be extremely vulnerable and to require support from society and the State.

In resolution 54/124 the General Assembly recognizes that "the basic objective of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family should be to strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions and to build upon their strengths ..."

At the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, held in Geneva, 26-30 June 2000, repeated reference was made to the squalid conditions in which so many people in poor countries live. They are an affront to our common humanity, and no country can be called prosperous when so many people are left to fend for themselves against ignorance, hardship and disease.

A rising number of families are living in poverty, especially single-parent families. In many parts of the world families are enduring the consequences of globalization and the impact of sanctions.

Although in times of deep trouble the sense of family ties is a source of strength, extreme poverty can destroy, displace and separate families; in this situation, children, who are denied the right to be cared for, are the most vulnerable.

In resolution 54/124, "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family", adopted on 20 January 2000, the Secretary-General is requested to report to it, at its fifty-sixth session, through the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, on the appropriate ways and means to observe the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004.

Conclusions

To eradicate poverty and to improve social protection systems of poor and vulnerable families should be a priority target.

Families should be supported and empowered to fulfil their multiple functions and responsibilities and to realize their rights, with policies and programmes based on a functional and global approach to the family as basic provider of social security and protection.

It is necessary to increase awareness of family issues and problems and to promote knowledge of economic, social and demographic processes affecting families and their members.

There is a need to foster equal participation of men and women in family responsibilities and tasks, with the possibility for both to reconcile paid work and family life.

A review of the global situation of the family in 2004 should be included in the next programme of work of the Commission for Social Development.

As suggested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/124, the global situation of the family should be reassessed by the Commission for Social Development when adopting its next programme of work.

The follow-up to the International Year of the Family now has a clear target: the tenth anniversary in 2004. This requires close collaboration between the Family Unit, within the Division for Social Policy and Development, United Nations Secretariat, and non-governmental organizations. It is to be hoped that this cooperation will materialize into international meetings and other activities for the preparation for, and observance of, the tenth anniversary.

Another important feature of the tenth anniversary could be the preparation, by an open-ended working group of the Commission for Social Development, of a declaration on the roles, rights and responsibilities of the family. Such a declaration could be based on provisions already existing in United Nations instruments, on statements on the family contained in reports of United Nations international conferences and also on documents prepared to this effect by non-governmental organizations.



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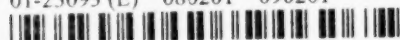
**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:
review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes
of action pertaining to the situation of social groups**

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

* E/CN.5/2001/1.



For a transnational policy for older persons

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons were adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in resolution 46/91.

These principles are divided into five sections: independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity.

In the interests of their independence, older persons should be able to procure food, shelter, water, clothing and health care through self-help and by having at their disposal income and community support.

These persons should be able to work or gain access to other sources of income and should have a say in arrangements for their pension. Furthermore, they must be able to attend appropriate training courses and live in a safe environment suited to their needs, so that they can remain in their own home for as long as possible.

The United Nations affirms, in respect of older persons' participation, that they should form an integral part of the community, participate in the formulation of policies affecting them and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.

These principles state, with regard to care, that the persons in question should receive family and community care in keeping with the level of protection and the cultural benchmarks of the society in which they live. They should be able to obtain health care in order to maintain or regain psychological well-being so as to ward off or delay the onset of diseases causing disability. They should be allowed to avail themselves of social or legal services enabling them to enhance their autonomy and should enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As for self-fulfilment, the United Nations requests Governments to ensure that older persons can realize their full potential and have access to the cultural and recreational resources of society.

Lastly, on the subject of dignity, older persons should be able to live in safety without ever being exploited or physically or mentally abused and they, like all other persons, should be treated without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, racial or ethnic background or economic circumstances.

This is a holistic view of the older person which FIAPA, together with its member associations, has always advocated, for the question of rights, while not being a recent issue, is now taking on some new aspects.

The United Nations has been concerned with this matter since 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed, but during recent years it has organized numerous international summits to identify various obstacles to these fundamental rights in a context of enormous changes in the world population. The United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, held in 1998 in Rome at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, was significant in that it adopted the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which specifically refers to crimes against the elderly.

More general results may be described as a substantial and welcome change of course.

At the most recent Group of Eight summit convened in July in Okinawa, the Japanese Presidency, supported by the delegations of Italy and the United Kingdom, proposed a three-pronged common strategy:

- To ensure that older persons enjoy a high quality of life after they retire from work;
- To make sure that they have the requisite occupational skills to allow them to fit back into the working world after retirement;
- To facilitate voluntary activities of benefit to the community after the normal working cycle of life.

The principles already set forth in the Vienna declaration of 1998 on "Ageing in Europe: solidarity between generations as a fundamental of social cohesion" are thus echoed and fleshed out.

Starting with the key idea that solidarity between the generations is the sine qua non underpinning the future and the social cohesion of tomorrow's societies, the Vienna declaration emphasizes the need to:

- Describe old age as an active phase of life in order to convey a positive public image of older people and prevent their being regarded as a burden;

- Define the purpose and volume of the transfer of resources and ideas between generations in order to heighten an awareness of mutual dependence;
- Promote mutual comprehension and cooperation among generations through constant support for schemes in which several generations take part;
- Encourage the media to underline the merits of all age brackets through a realistic representation of persons at all phases of their lives;
- Give greater weight to the principle of lifelong learning;
- Enhance the status of honorary functions in order to create an environment of solidarity between generations which extends beyond the family;
- Demonstrate the importance of families for solidarity among generations, work out measures to assist members of the family caring for relatives and see to it that the intermediate generation has social security cover;
- Enable older persons to look after their own interests through opportunities for participation in all levels of decision-making affecting them;
- Actively further the role of older persons as guardians and legatees of the cultural heritage of experience and specific knowledge in the interest of young people;
- Promote health in middle age and later years in order to reduce dependency.

In addition to these pointers, the Vienna meeting mapped out some basic steps to be taken in order to gain a better understanding of the ageing process and assist the sharing of experience.

Firstly, it would be useful to set up an observatory with the support of the European Commission, which would be able not only to pinpoint demographic trends throughout Europe, but also to analyse the impact of social policy choices on all age groups in the population and on families.

On the basis of its studies, this observatory should then work out measures and recommendations on European policy in this field. Greater impetus should be given to machinery for exchanging good practices at European level by actively involving

Governments, non-governmental organizations and experts from various countries.

Population forecasts and assessments of their effects will have to be used to underpin political decisions. The latest demographic forecasts for developing countries show that the ageing of their population will be a critical issue for them in 40 to 50 years' time.

That is a very short time, given that between now and then they will have to wage an all-out struggle against war, exploitation and poverty.

The first way of helping them, which is also the simplest and least restrictive method, is to relieve their enormous debt burden to the rich countries. Last year, Italy was the first European country to vote for the cancellation of this debt, while at the same time linking this move to certain measures designed to prevent assets being used in the future for military purposes or aggression against other countries.

Then, means must be found of internationally penalizing developed countries which systematically exploit the human and material resources of poor countries.

The only reliable remedy to migration is to foster conditions making for peace and economic growth, which is essential if all citizens are to live and grow old in dignity in their own country, among their own people and surrounded by their own culture.

In order to create the conditions for growth, economic assistance must be accompanied by training and transfers of knowledge, so that these countries can turn their human resources into genuine managerial classes.

These people, once they have become engineers, economists, agronomists or health workers, depending on the needs of each country, must be encouraged to reinvest their knowledge and skills in their countries of origin.

The remainder of the population must be helped to support themselves and their families by turning family resources to good account without harming the environment. Although this problem concerns the rest of the world in various ways and to a differing extent, it is Europe's duty to continue to follow and fuel the current debate about the inclusion of a European

charter of fundamental rights in the treaties of the European Union.

The European Council held in Cologne in 1999 drew everyone's attention to the need to draft such a charter, in order to recognize and protect these rights at a supranational European level.

Nicole Fontaine, the President of the European Parliament, went even further by calling for the inclusion of this charter in the treaties of the European Union. At the Intergovernmental Conference held in Nice in December 2000, great weight was attached to that discussion. Many heads of Government stated, albeit in subtly different wording, that its fundamental goal was to strengthen the political and social core of the Union.

The aim is therefore to look beyond the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, which laid the foundations for closer European social cohesion, but which contained many shortcomings when it came to recognizing the rights of older persons, which were couched solely in negative terms, such as the right to non-exclusion.

The codification of fundamental rights does not guarantee their observance, but in many parts of the world public-spiritedness and respect for the human being are unknown owing to the absence of such a legal safeguard and the abuse of power, hatred and war gain the upper hand at the expense of the weakest: the elderly, children and women.

In order to ensure that the needs of these people are respected, action must be taken to extend the observance of fundamental human rights throughout the world and this can be done only by taking our geopolitical and historic experiences as a starting point.

All such action must be free of any form of economic neo-imperialism and of any desire to force a European model of civilization on the world; the precise aim must be to contribute to other cultures and civilizations, depending on their degree of advancement, and to inspire them to share universal principles concerning human beings.

Older Europeans can do a great deal to that end, because they have freed their countries from poverty, war, intolerance and oppression and have forged a model of continental integration imbued with the principles of democracy, liberty and solidarity.

A model which, over the last 50 years, has proved that it can work might be an incentive for Europe and the developed nations of the earth to act in the eyes of the rest of the world as the agents of global sustainable development.

Older persons' organizations are prepared to play their role in this context by promoting the overall integration and greater legitimacy of international institutions representing principles and values rather than economic and financial considerations and opportunities.

If at world level the enormous potential and rich resources which older persons constitute for the society of the third millennium is recognized and given greater emphasis it will be a victory for all, young and old, women and children of the whole world.

FIAPA is calling for a transition from the study of often theoretical arguments to practical choices and feasible projects designed to secure a role and place more in tune with the new image of the older person of the third millennium.

It would be possible:

In the ethical and social field

- *To respect the rights of older persons as citizens (to combat all forms of physical or non-physical violence, all deprivation of liberty, and all forms of suffering and discrimination due to age);*
- *To promote the active commitment and participation of older persons in all social fields (political, occupational and solidarity);*
- *In particular to encourage active and passive voluntary activities of older persons by using cooperation among associations, which can prove essential when it comes to the political representation of their expectations and demands, but which likewise constitutes an acknowledgement of their right to participate in decisions related to choices concerning them;*

In the working world

- *To introduce annual wage increments, set the duration of working life at 35 to 37 years for example and abolish the statutory retirement age, thus making it possible for the individual to choose a rhythm of life making for self-fulfilment;*

- To take one or two sabbatical years and to defer retirement age accordingly. This would make it possible for men and women to devote themselves to subjects of interest to them (culture, further training or recreation) and to establish an age for stopping work in keeping with the demography of each country (between the ages of 70 and 75, for example);
- To promote the employment of older persons who would train young people and teach them all they knew in exchange for which the wages of one of them would be exempt from social security contributions or the social security contributions of both would be reduced by 50 per cent. This would permit the passing on of knowledge, especially in small and medium-sized businesses and industries and would cut the number of job seekers;
- To provide continuing and in-service training for older persons, above all in the sphere of new technologies;

In the field of pensions

- In the European Community, for example, to adopt legislation entitling a wage earner to apply for a pension in the last country in which he or she has worked (this would avoid a great deal of time-wasting paperwork);
- In Africa, to introduce a housing policy for older persons and to allocate a housing unit to an older person who also took in a youngster, provided that the latter promised to write down all the older person's historical, philosophical and other knowledge, in order to build up the long-awaited African library;
- To allow older persons the freedom to continue work or embark on new activities, although they had already reached retirement age, in recognition of the fact that these moves would substantially further their integration at productive, financial and social level (i.e. in the world of work);

Within the family

- To introduce a family wage for housewives on which social security contributions would be deducted to pay for a pension;

- To devise a system of entitlements according to the number of children, for housewives contribute added value to the country's economy;
- To promote exchanges between generations by young people teaching their elders about the new technologies;
- To promote exchanges between generations (through the passing on of experience and voluntary care in the family and neighbourhood) to facilitate the integration of older persons in a family context;
- To develop integrated home health care to help families meet the needs of older persons in difficulty;

In the fields of town planning and housing

- To plan housing which includes units for older persons so that they are not isolated but maintain contact with the community;
- To set aside a quota of housing units for dependent persons (whether or not elderly) when blocks are built. These housing units should be designed and equipped in such a way as to permit rational use by a disabled person;

In the financial field

- To help developing countries by scaling back part of their debt provided that the amounts in question are devoted to a proper social policy (investment in health, education, public security, etc.);
- To improve older persons' ability to save in order to promote the development of services and financial independence.

In conclusion, a joint commitment must exist and must focus on certain basic lines of thinking which must be translated into practice. As it evolves, this joint commitment must rest on certain fundamental notions which must be translated into firm pledges and be respected in government decisions:

- Ageing is now a universal phenomenon affecting both developed and developing countries; old age is just one phase of life and the older person, like any other human being, must be seen primarily as an individual;

- Policies seeking to guarantee a high quality of life and protect health and true democracy for all must be centred on respect for human dignity;
- Freedom of choice in all phases of life must not depend on economic, cultural or other factors;
- One goal must be to counter solitude in order to alleviate all forms of exclusion, especially the isolation of older persons in modern societies;
- The great human and cultural heritage constituted by the older members of all societies must be used to the best advantage;
- The most developed countries must undertake to assist less well-off countries while fully respecting their traditions and culture;
- **The cultural leap, which would be epoch-making in all respects and which would consist in regarding older persons not as a burden, but as a resource for the development of humanity, must be made.**

IN BRIEF:

We should attempt to arrive at specific, appropriate definitions of fundamental concepts such as active ageing, ageing in good health, parameters of human dignity, quality of life and social inclusion/exclusion so as to identify specific individual features of older persons' lives.
